



News Release

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Date: Oct. 8, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Dry conditions across much of the Missouri River basin are pushing the big reservoirs to record low levels and show no signs of improving. Runoff in September above Sioux City, Iowa, was only 42 percent of normal, the fourth lowest in 106 years of record keeping.

“Much of the basin remains dry. Fort Peck and Garrison inflows were only 40 and 25 percent of normal respectively,” said Brig. Gen. William Grisoli, Northwestern Division Engineer. Lake Oahe fell below its record low of 1580.7 feet msl on Oct. 2. The previous record was set in November 1989.

“Releases from Gavins Point Dam were set as high as 30,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) during September to meet our minimum service flow target of 35,000 cfs at Kansas City. There is very little tributary flow contribution below the system of reservoirs, added General Grisoli.”

Gavins Point releases averaged 28,500 cfs in September, compared to an average of 37,100 cfs. They are currently set at 27,500 cfs and will vary as necessary to meet downstream targets for the remainder of the navigation season. The season will be shortened 6 days to make up for the additional water released last winter for downstream water intakes.

Flow support for the commercial navigation season will end as follows:

Sioux City, Iowa	November 16
Omaha, Nebraska	November 18
Nebraska City, Nebraska	November 19
Kansas City, Missouri	November 21
Mouth near St. Louis, Missouri	November 25

Three public meetings to review the draft 2003-2004 Annual Operating Plan for the Missouri River will be held this month. The first will be Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 7 p.m. in Pierre, S.D. at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel, 920 West Sioux Ave. The second will Oct. 29, in Omaha, Neb., at 5 p.m., in the Northwestern Division office, 12565 W. Center Road. The third will be on Thursday, Oct. 30 in Columbia, Mo, at 7 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Select, 2200 I-70 Drive.

September's runoff totaled 495,000 acre feet. "Our runoff forecast above Sioux City for 2003 has been reduced to 17.7 million acre feet (MAF)," said Grisoli. Normal annual runoff is 25.2 MAF.

Localized rain in the Kansas River basin has made it unnecessary to take water out of conservation storage to supplement Missouri River flows from Kansas City to the mouth as previously planned. Releases of water from the flood control pools at Tuttle Creek and Milford reservoirs are providing the 2,000 cfs flows to meet flow targets on the Missouri River. However, continued drought conditions may make it necessary to withdraw water from storage late this month or in early November.

System storage ended September at 41.4 MAF, a record low for that date. The previous record was 42.5 MAF in 1990. Last year at this time it was 45.5 MAF. The amount of water currently stored in the reservoirs is nearly 17 MAF below average.

Lewis and Clark Lake is currently at elevation 1207.5 feet msl. It will be held near that elevation during the fall and winter.

Fort Randall releases averaged 28,100 cfs in September. In October, they will range from 27,000 to 29,000 cfs as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark Lake near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended the month at 1353.1 feet msl. It will continue its annual drawdown, ending the month near elevation 1345 feet msl.

Lake Oahe dropped three feet during September, ending the month at elevation 1581 feet msl. It will drop two more feet during October, ending the month 23 feet below normal. The reservoir is 5 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 16,900 cfs during September. They were reduced from 19,500 cfs to 14,000 cfs around mid-September and held there for two weeks longer than scheduled. The delay in further cuts was to allow for dredging around several municipal and industrial intakes in the Bismarck-Mandan area. Releases were cut to 10,000 cfs in early October where they will remain until mid-November. Lake Sakakawea fell two feet in September, ending the month at 1820.9 feet msl. It will drop one foot in October, ending the month 19 feet below normal. The lake is nearly 7 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 6,300 cfs in September. Releases were reduced from 7,000 cfs to 4,500 cfs on Sept. 23, where they will remain until late November. The lake dropped more than one foot in September, ending the month at elevation 2209.6 feet msl. It will fall less than one foot in October, ending the month 25 feet below normal. Last year at this time it was 8 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 751 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in September, 71 percent of normal. The forecast for 2003 energy production is 7.5 billion kWh compared to a normal of 10 billion kWh.

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Daily and forecasted reservoir and river information is available on the water management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at www.nwd.usace.army.mil.

MISSOURI RIVER MAIN STEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On Sep 30	Change in Sep	On Sep 30	% of 1967-2002 Average	Change in Sep
Fort Peck	2209.6	-1.2	10,492	67	-202
Garrison	1820.9	-2.0	13,512	71	-530
Oahe	1581.0	-3.4	11,932	66	-759
Big Bend	1420.2	-0.2	1,693	98	-14
Fort Randall	1353.1	-0.7	3,367	98	-67
Gavins Point	1207.3	+0.9	393	91	+25
			41,389	71	-1,547

WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR SEPTEMBER

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	6.3	374	56
Garrison	16.9	1003	136
Oahe	28.0	1669	220
Big Bend	26.2	1558	92
Fort Randall	28.1	1671	173
Gavins Point	28.5	1693	74
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